

PUBLIC INPUT

Through the biennial budget process, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee meetings and other public forums, there is ongoing public dialogue regarding the Wisconsin TANF program. The Department took a number of steps to publicize the availability of the draft Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2004-FFY 2005 TANF Plan as a means of soliciting comments from the public.

In mid-October, the Department placed an announcement on its public website homepage regarding the availability of the draft plan for public comment. A web link was provided to the draft plan and instructions were included about how to submit comments and the timeframe for submitting them. In early November 2003, the Department mailed out information regarding the availability of the draft plan on the Department's website and the opportunity to comment on the plan through the public hearing process, by e-mail or regular mail. Information about how to obtain a hard-copy of the draft plan was also provided. The information went to 600 groups and individuals, including W-2 agencies, Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) Area Administrators and Assistant Area Administrators, child care coordinators, child support agencies, directors of county departments of human services and social services, tribal economic support directors and the Great Lakes Intertribal Council.

As part of this public comment process, the Department scheduled and conducted a public hearing in Madison on November 20, 2003, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. A notice of this hearing was placed on the Department's website and published in the Wisconsin State Journal on November 13, 2003. The public hearing notice included information on who to contact at the Department to obtain a copy of the plan, how to access the plan on the Department's website, information about providing testimony at the public hearing, and the opportunity to submit written comments. Written comments on the plan were accepted by the Department for consideration through December 12, 2003.

The Department received a number of comments on the plan via e-mail, regular mail and through the public hearing. The comments included recommendations for language changes within the state plan, for state statutory changes and for changes in how the TANF program is administered. All comments were considered and two changes were made to the plan as a result.